



Severe storms and power outages

Washington State Emergency Management Division
Phone: (800) 688-8955 – Media Only

A major impact of wind- and ice storms is power interruptions. When the power goes out, people lose their sources of light, heat and water. When the power goes out, safety becomes a major concern.

Getting prepared for power outages

- Register life-sustaining electrical equipment with your utility.
- Consider purchasing a small generator or know where to rent one if you use life-sustaining equipment that requires electrical power.
- Post the telephone number of the New Construction, Repairs and Power Outage listing of your local utility.
- If you own an electric garage door opener, learn how to open it without power.
- Prepare a power outage kit. For short outages, consider having glow light sticks, flashlights, battery-powered radio, extra batteries and a wind-up clock on hand.
- Make sure you have an alternate heat source and a supply of fuel.
- Have a corded or battery-powered phone available (cordless phones do not work without power).
- When installing generators, follow the manufacture's instructions and have it inspected by the utility company and the state electrical inspector.

When the lights go out

- Report power outages to your utility company.
- Once you report your outage, do not use your telephone or cell phone. Phone lines are needed for emergency use. Do not call 9-1-1 unless you have an emergency and need a response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel.
- If your house is the only one without power, check your fuse box or circuit breaker panel. Turn off large appliances before replacing fuses or resetting circuits.
- If power is out in the neighborhood, disconnect all electrical heaters and appliances to reduce initial demand and protect the motors from possible low voltage damage.
- If you leave home, turn off or unplug heat-producing appliances.
- Stay away from downed transmission lines and report them to your utility company.
- Unplug computers and other voltage sensitive equipment to protect them against possible surges (even if you have surge protectors) when power is restored.
- Conserve water, especially if you are on a well.
- Keep doors, windows and draperies closed to retain heat in your home.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. If the door remains closed, a fully loaded freezer can keep foods frozen for two days.
- Be extremely careful of fire hazards from candles or other flammable light sources.
- When using kerosene heaters, gas lanterns or stoves inside the house, maintain ventilation to avoid a build-up of toxic fumes.
- Connect lights and appliances directly to a generator, not an existing electrical system.
- Leave one light switch in the on position to alert you when service is restored.

For more information, call your local emergency management office.